

Abstract of the Disclosure

The present invention is an apparatus for inspecting foreign particles/defects, comprises an illumination optical system, a detection optical system, a shielding unit which is provided in said detection optical system to selectively shield diffracted light pattern coming from circuit pattern existing on an inspection object and an arithmetic processing system, wherein said shielding unit comprises a micro-mirror array device or a reflected type liquid crystal, or a transmission type liquid crystal, or an object which is transferred a shielding pattern to an optical transparent substrate, or a substrate or a film which is etched so as to leave shielding patterns, or an optical transparent substrate which can be changed in transmission by heating, sudden cold, or light illumination, or change of electric field or magnetic field, or a shielding plate of cylindrical shape or plate shape.